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Prevention of armed conflict

Letter dated 15 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instructions of my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you a copy of a note verbale, dated 12 June 2017, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia (see annex) addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Costa Rica with regard to the reference to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the joint press statement by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and Costa Rica (A/71/921).

I kindly request that the present letter and its annex be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 31.

(*Signed*) Zohrab **Mnatsakanyan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 15 June 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Note verbale from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Costa Rica

With regard to the reference to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the joint press statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Costa Rica, Manuel González Sanz, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Elmar Mammadyarov, issued at San José on 2 June 2017, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia has the honour to communicate the following:

- The reference to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement, as it appears in the joint press statement, represents the Azerbaijani one-sided interpretation of the conflict and contradicts the position and the peace efforts of the only internationally agreed format of the conflict resolution — that of the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), comprising the United States of America, France and Russia.
- Since 2009, the Presidents of the Co-Chair countries have issued five statements underlining that the conflict resolution should be based on three principles of international law, namely, the non-use of force or threat of the use of force, territorial integrity and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples. Furthermore, they outlined the elements of the settlement, stressing that the future legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh should be determined through a legally binding expression of the will of its population.
- As the Co-Chairs have stated on numerous occasions, these principles and elements are conceived as an integrated whole, and any attempt to select some of them at the expense of others will make it impossible to achieve a solution.
- It is regrettable that the joint press statement does not refer to these internationally elaborated and endorsed principles and elements. Singling out the principle of territorial integrity, with complete disregard for the other two principles of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution, constitutes implicit support for one side of the conflict over the other, deviates from the principles of neutrality and impartiality and undermines the efforts of the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group.
- The selective reference in the press statement to the 1993 Security Council resolutions as the basis for the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution is highly irrelevant, since the said resolutions themselves do not pertain to the conflict settlement, but to the cessation of hostilities, which has been continuously violated by Azerbaijan itself.
- Furthermore, the name of the conflict as it appears in the joint press statement is used solely by Azerbaijan in its efforts to misinterpret the essence of the issue and does not correspond to the wording used by the Co-Chairs, who refer to it as "the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict".
- Azerbaijan's continuous attempts to mislead the international community and misrepresent the conflict settlement inflict serious damage on the negotiation process.

Needless to say, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution process is of a highly sensitive character. Therefore, strictly adhering to the wording and language used by the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group while referring to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict settlement efforts will contribute to remaining neutral and impartial, and will support peace efforts.

Yerevan, 12 June 2017